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Cult 'Hit List' of U.S. Officials Investigated by Secret Service

WASHINGTON (UPI) — The U.S. Secret Service is investigating whether high U.S. officials it protects were on a reported "hit list" of public figures the Peoples Temple allegedly planned to assassinate, officials said today.

Justice Department spokesman Terrence Adamson said the department and FBI probes are focusing on "specific facts and specific individuals." He would not elaborate, saying he could not comment on an ongoing investigation.

But it was learned the Secret Service is simultaneously investigating reports the cult assembled a hit-squad of members who did not commit suicide but were assigned by the Rev. Jim Jones, the cult's leader, to carry out the assassinations.

A spokesman for the FBI, asked whether it is investigating charges that cult lawyer Mark Lane knew of the planned mass suicides in advance, said:

"We have interviewed Mark Lane as to what he had (known) before, and what he has now." He declined to comment further.